



Fort McKavett Gazette

“News of our Volunteers and Friends”

Volume 5, Number 9 **September, 2006**

Fort McKavett State Historical Site
P. O. Box 68
Fort McKavett, Texas 76841



October 7-8, 2006 EXPO, TPWD
Headquarters Austin
October 14-15, Timeline Living
History at the Battleship Texas
SHS
October 21, 2006 Fort McKavett
Town reunion and Friends
Meeting
October 21, 2006 JSACAAC Public
Star Party
October 27th-29th, 2006 Living
History at the Sibley Center,
Midland, Texas
December 1 - 3 ~ 25th Annual
Christmas at Old Fort Concho
Feb 10-11, “Remember the
Maine” SpanAm event Battleship
Texas

*Color Copies of all the
Fort McKavett Gazette
can be found at:
www.fortmckavett.org*



Fort
McKavett
State
Historic
Site

*Town Reunion
JSCAS Star Party
Friends of Fort McKavett
Annual Meeting,
October 21st*

**Fun and Games for all:
Star Party after Dark
Friends Meeting at 1:30 PM
Town Reunion 10 AM – 4 PM
Lunch 12 Noon
Living History Displays during
the day
Artillery Display and Firing
Vintage Music
Guided Tours
Silent Auction 10 A.M-1P.M.**

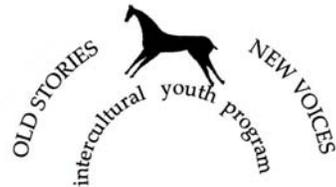
*If you can be on site to assist, with
any of the programs that day
please contact Alfredo Munoz or
Ken Lester at the Fort ASAP. We
need help with food preparation,
serving, photographs, parking,
and a host of other chores.
Friend’s members are
encouraged to bring a salad or
dessert for the noon meal and any
item for the silent auction which
begins at 10 A.M.*

Old Stories, New Voices Follow-up

A follow-up meeting with campers and parents was held at the Bullock Museum in Austin September 23rd on our Youth Camp this last summer. Ken Pollard, Horace Williams, John Cobb, Adrienne Booth, Mark Stine, Steve Cure and Terri Killen were on hand to meet with the campers and parents. After a short presentation, they got tours of the Bullock's exhibits.



Starting from the left upper corner, Mark and Adrienne; Ken Pollard with Bullock Staff Member Kim; Horace William, Ken Pollard, John Cobb in uniform. And on the bottom, some of the campers and their parents in attendance. After the campers went through the tour, then they got to take their parents on tour through the museum. The parents were appreciative of the efforts Fort McKavett made in this venture!



Fort McKavett, Texas
June 25-July 1, 2006

*Photographs and Logo by Terri Killen
Texas Historical Association*



The Lost Bowie Mine

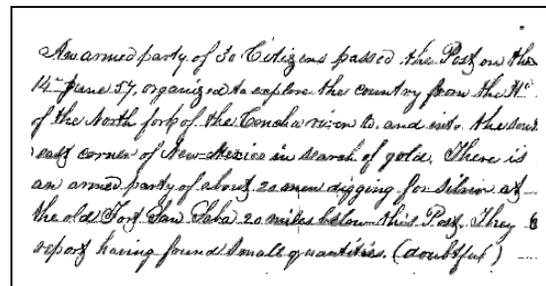
An expedition seeking a site for an Apache mission in 1753 led to the discovery of Los Almagres Mine in what is now Llano County. Traversing the Central Mineral Region, Lt. Juan Galván heard from Indians of a *cerro de almagre*, a hill of red ocher, indicating the presence of mineral-bearing ores. Upon Galván's return to San Antonio, several men from that settlement were guided to the hill by Apache Indians in August 1753.

The Apache mission and a presidio were established on the San Saba River starting in April of 1757 near the site of present-day Menard. The presidio captain, Diego Ortiz Parrilla, seeking permission to move his garrison to Los Almagres to work the mine, obtained ore samples and smelted them at his post. He calculated a yield of 1½ ounces of silver from seventy-five pounds of ore. After destruction of the San Sabá Mission by hostile Indians in March 1758, Ortiz Parrilla was reassigned. The mine was never officially opened.

Stephen F. Austin, on his first trip to Texas, heard from Erasmo Seguín that there was a rich silver mine on the San Saba River and a gold mine on the Llano. Hearing again in Mexico City of the unworked ore deposit called Los Almagres "in the territory of Sansava," he sent soldiers to inspect it. They probably went to the wrong place. In 1829 the mythical "lost" silver mine of San Sabá began appearing on Austin's maps. A year later, Henry S. Tanner borrowed Austin's designation for his own famous Texas map. Its wide distribution resulted in "a rash of maps showing silver mines near the old Spanish fort." Austin, doubtless realizing the value of the legend in attracting immigrants, repeated it in an 1831 promotional pamphlet. For years afterward it was mentioned in nearly every book about Texas.

James and Rezin Bowie, on their sallies into the Hill Country, reinforced the legend. Los Almagres was transformed into the "lost San Saba mine," then the "lost Bowie mine."

There is no way to know the number of people who have searched for "Bowie's Lost Mine" since then, but people still try.



June, 1857 found 1st Lt. S. B. Holabird noting two different armed parties of men searching for gold, one on the way to New Mexico via the Concho River and the other at "Fort San Saba". They claimed to have found some gold. He says, "Doubtful".

October 21st, 2006
Annual Friends of Fort
McKavett Meeting and Fort
McKavett Town Reunion
Star Party after Dark



Fort McKavett School with Hospital (Ball House) in Background

Barbeque at Noon – Living History Exhibits all day – Annual Friends of Fort McKavett Meeting at 1:30 – Artillery Displays and Cannon Firing – Guided Tours of the Fort – Johnson Space Center Amateur Astronomical Society Star Party starting at Dark

Festivities start at 10:00 AM and last until???

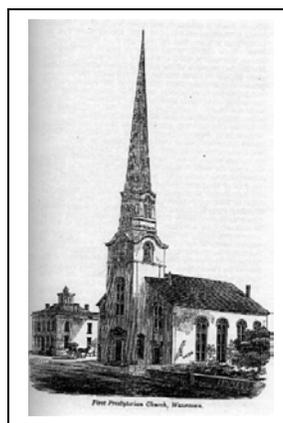
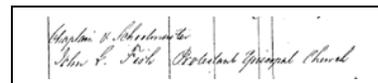
Note: If you have photographs or documents you would like to share with the Fort McKavett Research Center and Post Library, we will scan them into the collection on site so you can take it back home with you!

Fort McKavett's First Chaplain
and Schoolmaster

Doctor of Divinity, John F. Fish from Watertown, New York, became Fort McKavett's first Chaplain and Schoolmaster on his arrival in 1852. He was assigned to that post until he was transferred in late 1853 to Jefferson Barracks where he was the Post Chaplain there until his death in 1878.

Fish, John F. N.Y. Mo. Chap posts of San Antonio and Ft McKavett Tex and Jefferson Barracks Mo 23 Feb 1849 to 2 May 1867; post chap 3 Apr 1867; died 21 Oct 1878.

Left: Heitman's Registry shows John Fish's Military Record. Below, 1852 Post Records from Fort McKavett



Left: Chaplain Fish was the Rector at the First Episcopalian Church in Watertown, New York before joining the army in 1849. In September 1840, Rev. John F. Fish was engaged and remained until Sept. 22, 1844. During his ministry, the numbers of the church increased from 56 to 134; there were 94 confirmations, 127 baptisms, 142 marriages, and 55 burials.

In 1867, Fish was appointed as Chaplain in the Regular Army by Secretary of War Stanton and Congress:

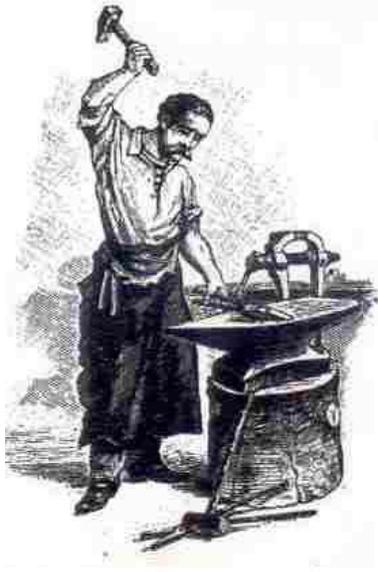
War Department,
 Washington, March 18th, 1867

Sir: I have the honor to propose for your approbation the following-named persons for appointment as post chaplains in the Army of the United States, under the act approved March 2, 1867; these chaplains are now in service under appointments by councils of administration, and on duty at posts announced by the War Department as chaplain posts: Mark L. Cheevers, John F. Fish, E. G. Gear, Alpha Wright, A. A. Reese, J. C. Raynor, John McCarty, Joshua Sweet, John Burke, Joseph Hurlbut, Francis Springer, Osgood E. Herrick, M. J. Cramer, Norman Badger, J. L. Elliott, Thomas B. Van Horne, John Woart, Charles Reynolds, Daniel Kendig, Joseph A. M. La Tourette, Alvan G. White, Alexander McCleod, Chauncey W. Fitch, Dudley Chase, David White, Charles M. Blake, M. Harris, E. H. Leavitt, Hiram Stone.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

E. M. STANTON,
 Secretary of War

The act of 1838 mandated that the chaplain should "perform the duties of schoolmaster" at the post. At first, instruction was limited to children of officers and other Army personnel serving at the post. Later, this became more than a post school; it became a public free school for all persons of school age.



Blacksmiths at Fort McKavett

A **blacksmith** is a person who creates objects from iron or steel by "forging" the metal; i.e., by using hand tools to hammer, bend, cut and otherwise shape it in its non-liquid form. Usually the metal is heated until it glows red or orange as part of the forging process. Blacksmiths create such products as wrought iron gates, grills, railings, light fixtures, furniture, sculpture, tools, decorative and religious items, cooking utensils and weapons. A skilled blacksmith can make a good looking product that shows skill and ingenuity.

1	Blacksmith	Dr. Maerle	\$50.00	and a ration
1	Guide and Interpreter	.	\$40.00	and a ration

January 1854 Post Returns shows Fort McKavett's first Blacksmith was paid \$45 a month and rations

Blacksmiths for the Army were paid civilians. A blacksmith, who works primarily with horses, especially making and fitting horse shoes, is called a farrier. These were Soldiers who received extra pay (.35 per day).

One (1) Blacksmith @ \$60.00 per month and one ration per diem
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By the time the Post closed, the Civilian Blacksmith was paid \$60 per month and rations.

Other civilians over the years at the Post included Clerks, Guides, Interpreters, Teamsters, Carpenters, and Stone Masons. The pay ran from \$2.00 per day all the way up to \$75.00 per month with rations.

Army Laundresses

U.S. Army laundresses, often wives of senior enlisted men, were once given daily rations, quarters, fuel, bedding straw, and medical services. Until the mid-1870's, Laundress Quarters were substandard at best. Even after the new quarters were built, many still had to live in poor dwellings. These ladies were both black and white and several children were among their numbers. Until the last years of the Post, enlisted men had no place to keep their families. The majority of their wives became laundresses to be able to stay on the reservation.

An article in *Nebraska History* magazine (Winter 1980) reported on the "ladies of Soap Suds Row," who not only washed for soldiers on Nebraska and other western military posts, but provided social contact and occasional nursing care as well.

Fort McKavett had 28 Laundress Quarters on the north side of the Post, one on the south side (the old Sgt Major's quarters), and five on the east side. Most of these were "Jackal" buildings of stone and cast off pieces of lumber.



Left: Typical type Jackal buildings used as laundress quarters. They had a stone foundation, a stone chimney, and the rest was built of cast off pieces of wood.

Laundresses were paid \$10-\$12 per month, plus their rations, plus the housing, and then were paid "by the piece" of clothing they washed. This could add up to a "right tidy" sum each month. If they wanted to be with their husbands, they had to either be a laundress or live in "Scabtown" across the river from the Post.